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## TOTEMISM UNVEILED.

*Totemism and Exogamy: a Treatise on Certain Early Forms of Superstition and Society.* By Prof. J. G. Frazer. In four vols. Vol. i., xix+579; vol. ii., ix+640; vol. iii., ix+583; vol. iv., v+379; eight maps. (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1910.) Price 2l. 10s. net the four vols.

PROF. FRAZER is a great artist as well as a great anthropologist. He works on a big scale; no one in any department of research, not even Darwin, has employed a wider induction of facts. No one, again, has dealt more conscientiously with each fact; however seemingly trivial, it is prepared with minute pains and cautious tests for its destiny as a slip to be placed under the anthropological microscope. He combines, so to speak, the merits of Tintoretto and Meissonier. What, then, we may ask, of the philosophical result, of the theory which should emerge from all this acreage of minute workmanship?

In "Totemism and Exogamy" (so far the most voluminous of his anthropological treatises) he admits—the passage is an interesting one—that he has "never hesitated either to frame theories which seemed to fit the facts, or to throw them away when they ceased to do so; my aim in this and my other writings has not been to blow bubble hypotheses which glitter for a moment and are gone; it has been by a wide collection and an exact classification of facts to lay a broad and solid foundation for the inductive study of primitive man."

To the mind of the truly scientific inquirer, the theory of a subject is a continuously modified machine, the object of which is at once to sort the elements of a combination and to re-combine them, so that by a turn of the handle the observer can reproduce the original process in all or any of its parts. Such a machine only arrives at perfection after a long evolution guided by the "method of trial." Prof. Frazer in anthropology, as Darwin in biology, is content to try new models, and to fit new parts, not with the meticulousness of static curatorship, but with the abandon of experimental genius.

This method and its result are illustrated in a very perfect way by that portion of the book which is concerned with totemism. This portion (if we may express our own belief at the risk of offending Prof. Frazer's characteristic modesty), is actually "The Complete History of Totemism, its Practice and its Theory, its Origin and its End." Commencing with a reprint of the first (1887) edition of "Totemism," a model of its kind, a brief and digested survey of the then known facts (and in its working hypotheses innocuous enough to serve as an introduction for the complete treatise), he next reproduces his first tentative theory in "The Origin of Totemism" (*Fortnightly Review*, 1899), namely, that the essence of it is the "external soul," as suggested in "The Golden Bough" of 1890, only to discard it, in the light of the remarkable discoveries made by Messrs. Spencer and Gillen in Central Australia, for another form, a system of magic, "designed to supply a community

with all the necessities of life, and especially with the chief necessary of all, with food," a notable picture of cooperation tinged with superstition. Next, in the reprint, "The Beginnings of Religion and Totemism Among the Australian Aborigines" (*Fortnightly Review*, 1905; articles expanded from "Observations on Central Australian Totemism," in the *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, vol. xxviii., 1899), he reproduces his third hypothesis.

As this, in the present writer's opinion, when completed by the discoveries of Dr. W. H. R. Rivers, and fully expounded in vol. iv., is the final explanation of the mystery of totemism, and as even its author admits that "here at last we seem to find a complete and adequate explanation of the origin of totemism," it calls for detailed attention. In 1899, Messrs. Spencer and Gillen described the Arunta and Kaitish method of determining the totem.

"A person derives his totem neither from his father nor from his mother, but from the place where his mother first became aware that she was with child. Scattered all over the country are what Messrs. Spencer and Gillen call local totem centres, that is, spots where the souls of the dead are supposed to live awaiting reincarnation, each of these spots being haunted by the spirits of people of one totem only; and wherever a pregnant woman first feels the child in her womb, she thinks that a spirit of the nearest totem centre has entered into her, and accordingly the child will be of that local centre, whatever it may be, without any regard to the totem either of the father or of the mother."

This Prof. Frazer terms conceptional totemism.

"The theory on which it is based denies implicitly, and the natives themselves deny explicitly, that children are the fruit of the commerce of the sexes."

He gives probable reasons for this apparently strange ignorance.

Turning now to the summary and conclusion in vol. iv. of the present work, we read:—

"Obviously, however, this theory of conception does not by itself explain totemism. . . . It stops short of doing so, by a single step. What a woman imagines to enter her body at conception is not an animal, a plant, a stone, or what not; it is only the spirit of a human child which has an animal, a plant, a stone, or what not for its totem. . . . For the essence of totemism . . . consists in the identification of a man with a thing, whether an animal, a plant, or what not. . . . Absolutely primitive totemism . . . ought to consist in nothing more or less than in a belief that women are impregnated without the help of men by something which enters their womb at the moment when they first feel it quickened."

The "missing link" was found in the Banks' Islands by Dr. W. H. R. Rivers. Here the natives "identify themselves with certain animals or fruits and believe that they themselves partake of the qualities and character of these animals and fruits. . . . The reason they give for holding this belief and observing this conduct is that their mothers were impregnated by the entrance into their wombs of spirit animals or spirit fruits, and that they themselves are nothing but the particular animal or plant. . . ."

The theory, as thus completed, "accounts for all the facts (of totemism) in a simple and natural manner."

Hence, as secondary results, the practice of abstaining from killing and eating the totem, and conversely of occasionally eating a little; the belief that men have a magical power over their totems, particularly that of multiplying them; the belief that people are descended from their totems, and that women sometimes give birth to these animals or plants; the fact that people often confuse their ancestors with their totems; and, lastly, the fact that totems comprise an immense range of organic, physical, and artificial objects, the reason being

"that there is nothing from the light of the sun or the moon or the stars down to the humblest implement of domestic utility which may not have impressed a woman's fancy at the critical season and have been by her identified with the child in her womb."

One great merit of the theory, it will be seen, lies in this—that it rests upon a psychical phenomenon of universal occurrence. In a very interesting section, the author connects the facts of totemism with the "longings," the *envie*, of pregnant women. The persistence of the belief and the difficulty of explaining away the physical results of "maternal impressions" on the offspring are most significant. As the author observes, if totemism existed to-day in England, the child of the lady who had a "longing" for raspberries, would, being marked with a raspberry, clearly outlined on the back of the neck, have had a raspberry for its totem. The possibilities latent in such world-wide ideas may explain, suggests the author, the remarkable preservation of clan type in clan exogamy.

"The children of each clan take after their mothers or their fathers, as the case (that is, of residence) may be, according as the mental impressions made on pregnant women are derived mainly from their own clan or from the clan of their husband."

We are glad to see that the author recognises, and continually emphasises, the primary independence of totemism and exogamy; they "are fundamentally distinct in origin and nature, though they have accidentally crossed and blended in many tribes." Throughout the book exogamy is treated as an accidental adjunct of totemism. Yet a complete explanation of its origin and evolution is attempted. In our opinion, this explanation is unconvincing. By a curious irony, J. F. McLennan, the discoverer of both institutions, never essayed an explanation of totemism, but concentrated his mind on an explanation of exogamy, now shown conclusively to be erroneous. Prof. Frazer, on the other hand, found in totemism his first interest, and his explanation of it constitutes his greatest triumph, while in dealing with exogamy he seems to be engaged on a secondary problem. An excellent discussion of theories is followed by a comparison of the action of exogamy to that of scientific breeding. His account of the development of exogamy from an original prohibition of the "marriage" of brothers and sisters is masterly enough, and we are grateful for it. That the later prohibitions were deliberate we cannot doubt; it is when he follows Messrs. Howitt, Spencer, and Gillen in asserting that the first dichotomy of the primitive group, for the prevention of brother-sister unions, into

two halves was also deliberate, that we feel unsatisfied. He rests on an assumed and unexplained superstition (as to the evil effects of incest) in the primitive mind. Nor does he explain how a group, however small, could be divided into two. On what *principle* could it be done? Here he ignores Mr. J. J. Atkinson's theory of primal law.

Nearly two thousand pages are occupied with an ethnographical survey of totemism, an invaluable compilation. The maps, including that of the distribution of totemic peoples, are a new and useful feature. The notes and corrections bring the reprints up to date.

A. E. CRAWLEY.

#### A THEORY OF PREHISTORIC RHODESIA.

*Prehistoric Rhodesia.* By Richard N. Hall. Pp. xxviii+88. (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1909.) Price 12s. 6d. net.

MR. R. N. Hall, the South African excavator, is not very tolerant of criticism. He is up again, and running full tilt against Dr. Randall Maciver, who, in "*Mediaeval Rhodesia*," dared to try to demolish his prehistoric Semitic Zimbabwe theory. Whether Dr. Maciver was right in all his contentions as to the stratification of Zimbabwe, the Nankin china found in it, and so forth, cannot be decided until after he has replied to Mr. Hall's objections as stated in this book. We have little doubt that his reply will finally dispose of these objections, which, of course, Mr. Hall was perfectly justified in advancing if he felt that Dr. Maciver had not handled the evidence rightly. It is, however, a pity that in doing this Mr. Hall allows a certain tone of bitterness to appear in his references to his antagonist.

Mr. Hall is still dominated by the idea that he can find Semitic traces in South Africa. But, again, he brings forward no satisfying proofs of any tangible Semitic influence there. Round towers with conical tops are no proof of Semitic connection. It is not only the Semites who have built such. "Cones" are no speciality of the Semites. In support of the idea that Cones mean Semites, Mr. R. N. Hall brings forward references to Messrs. L. W. King and H. R. Hall's book, "*Egypt and Western Asia*." Mr. R. N. Hall's note referring to this supposed support for his theory reads as follows:—

"In King and Hall's '*Egypt and Western Asia*' reference is made to 'the great cone' at Sinai in the Elamite kingdom (p. 159); to the remains of a 'temple-tower' at Ninib at Babylon (p. 166); to the 'temple-towers' erected by Gudea at Shirpurla in southern Babylonia (p. 217); to 'massive temple-towers' at Samarra on the Tigris (p. 284); to 'cones' in Assyria (p. 392); and to the 'temple-tower' of Ashur (p. 410)."

Now, apart from the extraordinary solecisms "at Sinai in the Elamite kingdom," and "at Ninib at Babylon" (does Mr. R. N. Hall not know where Elam was, where or what Sinai is, or that Ninib was a god?), on referring, incredulous, to the work of Mr. L. W. King and his coadjutor, Mr. R. N. Hall's namesake, we find that this note of the South African Mr. Hall's is one of the oddest farragos of mis-